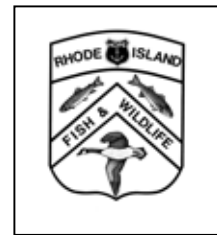




# RIDEM - DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

## TURKEY SEASON RESULTS SPRING 2005



Brian C. Tefft, Principal Wildlife Biologist  
Great Swamp Field Headquarters, West Kingston, RI 02892

The 2005 Rhode Island spring turkey season was held April 28 to May 26, 2005 and was the State's twentieth season since the spring season was initiated in 1986. Turkey hunters harvested 207 birds, a 6% reduction from a harvest of 220 during the 2004 season (table 1). The harvest includes 6 birds taken during the early junior hunter and paraplegic hunter seasons held April 23 and 24. Fewer permits were sold (701), down 47% from 2004 when hunters purchased 1323 permits to take 220 birds. Permit sales have declined significantly since 2003; the first year permits were sold. The hunter success rate was 33%, an all time season high. The harvest consisted of 87 juveniles (jakes) and 120 adults (gobblers), a 0.73 to 1 juvenile to adult ratio in harvested birds. The 2005 season was a safe season with no hunting accidents occurring.

The restoration of the wild turkey continues to be a major success story in R.I. with turkey hunters enjoying excellent hunting opportunities. The slight reduction in this years turkey harvest seems to be largely attributed to less hunter effort. Permit sales have declined with the abandoning of the "free" permits so that only the most dedicated turkey hunters bought permits. Turkeys were harvested in 20 of 39 towns around the state with the towns of Exeter (28), Glocester (17), Scituate (18) and W. Greenwich (18) producing the most birds. Private lands accounted for a majority of the harvested birds (86%), although 37 birds were also taken on ten different state wildlife management areas. Big River WMA in West Greenwich and Arcadia WMA in Exeter are the top producing state land areas. The first week of the season accounted for 60% of the harvest (123 birds), 16% were taken during second week, 14% during the third week and 10% were taken during the fourth week.

Several large gobblers were harvested during the season including 21 birds that weighed in at over 20 pounds. The average live weight for jakes was 14.9 pounds and the average live weight for adults was 19.7 pounds. The two largest birds weighed were three-year old 23.5-pound gobblers with 1-inch spurs and 10-inch beards harvested in Exeter. The state record is a 25.5-pound gobbler taken in 2001 in Exeter. Fourteen multiple bearded birds were harvested including thirteen double-beards and one triple-bearded bird. Resident hunters took 87% (180) of the birds compared to 13% (27 birds) for non-resident hunters. In spite of a significant reduction in hunter numbers, the overall hunting success of the 2005 spring gobbler season was remarkable.

**Table 1 Rhode Island Spring Turkey Season Results**

Town	2005 (4/28-5-26)	2004 (4/29-5/27)	2003 (4/30-5/26)	2002 (4/25-5/24)	2001 (4/26-5/22)	2000 (4/27-5/23)	19-Year total 1986-2005
Burrillville	14	19	20	24	11	16	174
Charlestown	8	14	11	16	15	8	99
Coventry	12	15	11	15	20	12	120
Cranston	2	0	4	3	8	0	20
E. Greenwich	1	0	1	2	2	0	8
Exeter	28	39	44	43	34	26	337
Foster	10	9	17	12	10	8	97
Glocester	17	20	24	14	10	8	129
Hopkinton	15	9	16	20	12	8	111
Johnston	3	2	7	0	3	0	18
Little Compton	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
N. Kingstown	6	6	11	7	4	1	38
N. Smithfield	6	13	8	10	3	4	50
Richmond	17	9	26	18	27	20	203
Scituate	18	18	20	23	14	16	142
S. Kingstown	18	13	10	14	5	3	68
Smithfield	8	12	12	19	11	6	78
Tiverton	3	0	2	0	1	0	6
Westerly	2	6	6	7	6	2	35
W. Greenwich	18	16	25	9	11	9	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1884</b>